

CIA DIRECTOR APOLOGIZES TO SENATE PANEL FOR HIS LETTER

**Fulbright Says Case
Is Closed — Morse
Had Demanded That
Helms Resign**

By WILLIAM K. WYANT JR.
A Washington Correspondent of
the Post-Dispatch

WASHINGTON, July 29—Richard M. Helms, Central Intelligence Agency director, apologized to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee today and apparently ended a one-day furor over alleged CIA involvement in domestic affairs.

Chairman J. William Fulbright (Dem.), Arkansas, said the newly appointed young chief of the nation's major intelligence operation had given a satisfactory explanation of a letter he signed. Fulbright said the matter was closed.

The uproar arose yesterday when nine senators joined in criticizing a letter Helms had addressed to the St. Louis Globe-Democrat, praising an editorial that described Senator Fulbright as a "crafty Arkansan" and criticized Fulbright's efforts to extend Senate surveillance of the CIA.

Calls for Resignation

Before the Senate committee met in closed session to hear Helms this morning, Senator Wayne Morse (Dem.), Oregon, said, Helms ought to resign his post. Morse's demand apparently drew no support from other committee members.

Democratic leader Mike Mansfield said that the new head of the CIA had made a mistake but had faced up to it and "ought to be given a chance."

"I regret writing the letter... I have apologized for it," Helms told newspaper men on arriving from the committee chambers in the Capitol. He smiled and made no reply when asked whether he had considered resigning.

Senator Fulbright said Helms had telephoned to him the previous afternoon to apologize. He said Helms told the committee the offending letter had been dictated by one of his assistants, and Helms signed it.

Assistant's Idea

The letter to the Globe-Democrat editor, Hamilton Thornton, was one of a number of letters on Helms's desk and the Globe-Democrat editorial was attached to it, Fulbright explained as he related what Helms had told Senators.

Fulbright said Helms indicated that the letter was his assistant's idea, rather than Helms's, and that "he didn't focus" his attention on either the letter or the attached editorial.

"He said it was a mistake. He apologized," Fulbright told reporters. Fulbright asserted that the editorial itself had not dis-

tressed him personally, because he received a dozen like it every week, and he had developed a thick skin.

Very Forthright

Fulbright said Helms had been "very forthright" in answering questions and had pointed out that the CIA had no charter to intervene in the nation's domestic affairs and was not doing so.

Fulbright questioned Helms about reports that the CIA had taken part in some way in labor union elections in the United States. He said Helms said the CIA had not intervened directly or indirectly, to his knowledge.

"But he can't know what every single individual does..." Fulbright observed.

Fulbright was asked whether he was satisfied as to Helms's qualifications, in the light of the letter incident, to continue as director of CIA.

"Yes, I think so," Fulbright replied.

Morse's Demand

Morse made his demand for Helms's resignation in a statement issued earlier.

Helms can "best serve his country by resigning," because he has violated the legal mandate not to operate within the United States or influence or participate in affairs within this country, Morse said. The Oregon Senator has long been one of CIA's sternest critics and a leader in the move to include foreign relations members on the special committee overseeing the intelligence agency's activities.



Associated Press Wirephoto

CIA Chief and Senator

Richard M. Helms (left), director of the Central Intelligence Agency, standing with Senator J. William Fulbright as he arrived to testify at a hearing of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in Washington today.

Symington Disapproves

Senator Stuart Symington (Dem.), Missouri, a member of the special unit, called Fulbright "an able and patriotic American" and said, "this is a most unfortunate occurrence and one for which I hope there is some explanation."

Other members of the special committee made similar statements. Senator John Stennis (Dem.), Mississippi, spoke of "this unfortunate letter" and said he thought Helms had relied on bad advice rather than on his own independent judgment.

Senator Leverett Saltonstall (Rep.), Massachusetts, expressed regret over the injection of "personal remarks" into the question of CIA supervision. Senator Milton R. Young (Rep.), North Dakota, said Helms's comments were not "appropriate policy."

A CIA source said the letter was one of several that had been written to newspapers commenting on editorials on the same issue.

It was learned that the letter was written by a veteran CIA public relations official, Stanley Grogan, a retired Army colonel, and presented to Helms for signature. The letter was published in the Globe-Democrat.

Morse referred to the letter to the Globe-Democrat as "only a small segment of what is going on" as he renewed the demand "that we find out what the CIA is doing to influence public opinion, public policy and the outcome of elections."

Helms, the Morse statement said, has twice intruded in matters directly concerning the Senate, the second intrusion being a reference to Helms's letter verifying the mission to Germany of Senator Thomas J. Dodd to Germany purportedly on a security investigation. That letter was released by the Senate committee investigating Dodd's relations with Julius Klein, lobbyist for German interests.

This, therefore, Morse said, "disqualifies him for further useful service in his present capacity." The "covert activities of the CIA have now been extended to the domestic affairs of our own country."

Four members of the CIA supervisory committee, which now represents only the Armed Services and Appropriations committees, joined in the criticism of Helms's letter and the defense of Fulbright.